

Glasser's Five Needs

William Glasser, in his 'Control Theory' (later renamed to 'Choice Theory') detailed five needs that are quite close to Maslow's Hierarchy, but with some interesting twists. They have implications for what we should do as teachers and what we should not.

1. Survival

This is similar to Maslow's Physiological and Safety level. They are basic needs, which are of little interest unless they are threatened. Survival relates to those things that help us be safe physically. Extension to psychological safety can be made as well. Ability to continue/ extend your physical and psychological existence.

2. Love and belonging

This is the same as Maslow's Belonging need and recognizes how important it is for us as a tribal species to be accepted by our peers. We relate to others. Others recognize and care about us. We can share our thoughts and feelings knowing that they will be listened to and that others will share with us as well.

3. Power or recognition

The Power element focuses on our ability to achieve our goals (which is perhaps a lower-level control need). Being treated with respect. People pay attention to us and value what we think, say and feel. We want to be recognized, noticed by others and have feelings of self-worth. We want to know how things work, have a legitimate chance to be successful and have others recognize our contributions.

4. Freedom

This is the ability to do what we want, to have free choice. We can choose to follow the rules or not follow the rules, what to wear/ not to wear. It is connected with fairness, having options, choices and a measure of independence and freedom from restrictions. We will do what we have to as long as we have opportunities to act on our own ideas. Not feeling restricted- both physically and psychologically.

5. Fun

An interesting ultimate goal. When all else is satisfied, we just (as Cyndi Lauper sang) 'want to have fun'. Laughing, lightness, humor, enjoyment and being able to smile are important to all of us.